

Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

Osney Bridge closed for 3 years

Serious disruption on Osney Bridge is nothing new, as local historian Mark Davies recently reminded us.

At 8.30 a.m. on 2 December 1885, part of the road bridge collapsed into the river without warning, after a pier gave way. Several people who were crossing the bridge at the time were thrown into the river. Most were rescued, but Rhoda Miles, an 11-year old girl from Swan Street on her way to buy a newspaper, was drowned.

It seems that the pier which gave way had been undermined by flood water after new sluices increased flow down the Osney cut. A temporary wooden bridge was quickly built to allow 'light traffic' to cross the river at Russell Street and there was a passenger ferry. Heavy traffic had to detour via Wolvercote. Arguments between the local and county councils about funding the bridge rebuilding meant that it did not reopen for another 3 years.

Information source: Oxford Mail

Growing bonsai

Tom Olesen, West Street

I've been growing bonsai for 6 or 7 years which, as bonsai experience is measured in decades, makes me a novice. But because I've obsessively absorbed information from books, videos and workshops I allow myself the vanity of 'intermediate'.



▲ A freshly trimmed and wired Chinese elm in a multi-trunk or 'Kabudachi' style

When people find out I grow tiny trees I often get: 'I had a bonsai once – it died.' This is usually through no fault of their own. Plants often get sold as 'indoor bonsai' and there are few species that do well in our dry and warm houses. Trees live outside, and so our tiny garden is overflowing with bonsai and bonsai-to-be. People are also surprised to learn that bonsai aren't specific types of dwarf plants, but rather regular plants made to look like miniature versions of big trees by horticultural techniques and artifice.

One of the interesting things about growing bonsai is the way it alters your way of looking at their full-size

cousins. Before looking through bons-eyes I don't think I'd really seen trees before. I'd looked at and admired beautiful big trees, loved climbing them as a child, but I'd never taken in all the nuances of their form.

You can check out my Instagram page at: www.instagram.com/budgetbonsaigardener

Working life

Two islanders fill us in on what they do for a living.

Trish Hodson, South Street, accessibility trainer and audio describer

My partner and I moved to Osney Island in April, having left Bristol for Oxford last summer.

After 24 years assisting disabled people at the Bristol Hippodrome, I decided to try my hand as a freelancer and created Access and Inclusivity Matters. I deliver staff training with a 'just get on with it' approach to improving visitor access for disabled people.

It became clear I'd need to diversify to make this adventure pay, and in 2019 I trained as an audio describer for theatre. Audio description is a spoken commentary that weaves between dialogue and sound effects, to give blind and visually impaired people key visual information. Although COVID-19 shut down theatres, I diversified into film and TV description, which has been great. I even set up a home-recording space involving duvets and clothes pegs.

I also write descriptions of lecture slides, for a blind student at Oxford. If a lecturer says 'as you can see on the slide', I have to describe the image, which, if it's uncaptioned, can mean a fair bit of Googling and detective work.

So, my freelance bow is much more adaptable than I realised, with the more strings the merrier.

John Jolliffe, East Street, musician and songwriter
I've lived on East Street for the past 12 years with my partner Ayles and our children Ella and Lilly, next door to the wonderful Maureen. I have been very lucky to have made a living as a musician since I was 23 (not that long ago...) with the odd years of being broke and starving.

Until the pandemic hit I was playing regular slots at Sandy's Piano Bar in Oxford. I also ran a children's venue in Henley and did children's parties most weekends.

Though this past 18 months has been difficult for so many people it gave me a chance to stop and get the creative juices running again. In the first 6 months I wrote a new album and an EP.

I also write songs for teaching English as a foreign language. This saved me financially during the pandemic as the company sent an avalanche of stuff to write in most styles: pop, jazz, reggae, African...challenging but so much fun.

I am now back at Sandy's, and I am starting to do children's parties again. Sadly I decided to stop running the children's weekly shows after many years.

All John's albums can be found on Bandcamp under John Jolliffe or on streaming sites, e.g. Spotify.



What's it like owning an electric car?

Some residents who have invested in hybrid cars share their experiences.

'I own a Toyota self-charge hybrid. It automatically switches between petrol and electric and charges the battery when coasting or braking. It generally uses electric under 30 mph so it suits me as, aside from local travel, I tend to do a long journey once a month and this means I'm not restricted by range.'

'Journeys in my PHEV are so pleasurable, gliding smoothly and silently along while the on-board computer shows 900+ miles per gallon.'

'We own a Toyota plug-in hybrid. We didn't feel the charging infrastructure was in place to go fully electric. We love it. It is not just a joy to drive but it is a great car for passengers as well. We have installed our own charger in our front porch and have two lengths of cable depending on how close we can park.'

'Charging is a challenge. Before buying an electric vehicle, research charging times and cost. Pure electric cars can go 100+ miles per charge. Hybrids have the safety net of running on petrol, but do not travel as far on one charge and may not have fast charging. Charging stations in the new Westway car park and the Seacourt Park and Ride are often not working. It is worth investigating if a charge point is permissible outside your house, or whether you can run a cable from your house, but you will need to think about safety and logistics.'

There is an on-street charger with plug-in for two cars at the north end of West Street. If you are thinking of investing in an electric vehicle and would like to talk to an islander who already owns one, please contact Jane Buekett (see last page).

Living on Osney

Kshitij Mohan, West Court

I moved to Oxford after completing my PhD in molecular biology at the beautiful and historic university town of Tübingen in Germany. It was extremely challenging for me to move to the UK in January this year, when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its peak.

Having been on Osney Island for 6 months now, I feel glad to have chosen living among a welcoming and vibrant community.

As an avid birdwatcher, I have been fascinated by the rich diversity of birds on the island. I have spotted more than 25 species of birds from my window — and still counting. The highlight of my time in Osney has been the Open Gardens — I loved interacting with people and enjoyed the magnificent gardens.

I am working as a postdoctoral scientist at the JR hospital, where I am studying the molecular mechanisms involved in heart regeneration. After a myocardial infarction (heart attack) the heart cells in humans die and are replaced with non-functional scar tissues. However, the hearts of several species of fish, some amphibians and neonatal mice (1 day old) can fully and functionally regenerate. My aim is to identify the molecular pathways that aid regeneration. This basic research could lead to a treatment for myocardial infarction.



▲ Kshitij and his wife Srishti at West Court

Osney Island Boat Club reopens

Fiona Ravenscroft, South Street

The Boat Club, established in 2000, is open again after moving from its shed on the river bank to a garage on South Street. Open to all residents of Osney Island it offers the use of three kayaks and a Canadian canoe. You can book and take out the boats at any time and explore the river and its streams, venture up the Cherwell past the colleges, or paddle to a secluded spot for a swim. Get a different perspective on our city with easy-to-handle boats that are suitable for all ages.

Membership is per household and costs just £50 per year plus a £30 joining fee. If you are interested in joining and want to view the boats, please contact me: fiona@myphone.coop

Allotments ban weedkiller

The Allotments AGM on 13 May voted to ban the storage and use of glyphosate-based herbicides (such as Roundup) on both sites. This is now an allotment rule. Leading on from this decision, Twenty Pound Meadow allotment holders who are concerned about biodiversity, soil quality and sustainability have formed an organic working group.

The group aims to meet informally every few weeks outside the shop, taking turns to visit each other's plots, and sharing ideas on topics such as dealing with pests and weeds, caring for the soil, and growing appropriate crops.

If you want to join in, look out for the dates of future meetings on the Allotments WhatsApp group.

St Frideswide's Church

At the end of July we said goodbye to Revd Kate Seagrave and wished her well in her new job in Winchester Diocese. And in early September we will welcome Revd Rachel Cross. She will join the team as an associate priest and will be living in the parish.

In August there will be only one service each Sunday – the 10.30 a.m. Parish Eucharist. All are welcome.

In September we will restart the 8.30 a.m. service of Holy Communion according to the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Services at St Margaret's, Binsey continue in the regular pattern with Evensong each Sunday at 4.30 p.m. between April and October, and a service of Holy Communion on the last Sunday of the month at 9.00 a.m.

You can contact Revd Clare Sykes, Rector of the Osney Benefice, at: revclare@btinternet.com

Open Gardens 2021

Susan Hutchinson, West Street

The sun came out! Nine gardens were open and all looked beautiful. I am very grateful to all those who opened their gardens and all those who visited. The variety of gardens was a definite theme this year. Each garden was different, reflecting the diversity and skill of their gardeners. After such a difficult 18 months it felt so good to take part in a community event again. I am now officially the guardian of Open Gardens and hope that the event will continue – metaphorically and literally – to flourish. Next year, we intend to be back properly with live music and tea on the towpath. Finally, I'd like to give heartfelt thanks to Anna Truelove for devising and nurturing Osney Open Gardens for so long.

There are photos from many of the gardens here: osneyisland.org.uk/open-gardens-2021

Art on Osney

Elizabeth Newbery, North Street

This small group of artists and makers meets regularly to promote artistic talent on Osney. We currently have ten members and between us cover a wide range of media including painting (all media), ceramics, printmaking, works on paper and small sculpture. Our first exhibition (COVID willing) will be a Christmas selling show on 5–7 November. Further details nearer the time. If you would like more details about the group please contact: elizabeth@newberyandengland.com

Antoinette Ibsen memorial

Following Antoinette's death in February, her children Maia, Keith and Alice are holding an open house memorial on Sunday 15 August. Anyone who knew Antoinette is welcome to join them at her Bridge Street house any time after 12 noon for a glass or two of her favourite sparkling. Please feel free to drop in at a time that suits you.

Recipe: Foraged pesto

This fresh and delicious recipe comes from Clare Backhouse, formerly of West Street, who

now works as a nutritionist based in Sussex:

www.transformationnutrition.org Clare argues that the variety of leaves in the pesto supports a healthy gut biota. It makes quite a lot so you can reduce the quantities.

Collect a couple of cups of greenery including:

- herbs from the garden or windowsill
- foraged leaves (nettles, dandelions, daisies, yarrow, valerian, sorrel etc.)
- leftover greenery (carrot tops, celery and beetroot leaves, parsley stalks)

If in any doubt check online that your leaves are from an edible plant. You also need:

- ½ a cup of any nuts OR home-sprouted green lentils/mung beans
- lemon juice and zest to taste
- olive oil
- salt
- garlic (optional)
- 1 or 2 tbsp fermented liquid such as kombucha (optional)

Finely chop the nuts in a food processor, add and chop the greens. Add the other ingredients and process to the consistency you prefer. Use as you would any pesto.

Directory of local suppliers

This list is compiled from islanders' recommendations only. Suppliers are removed if there are reports of unreasonable rates or service. The list is online at: osneyisland.org.uk/directory-of-local-suppliers Local shops and services are listed at: osneyisland.org.uk/local-shops-and-services Please contact Jane Buekett to submit additions or changes.

Baby kit

Baby kit for hire: 01235 28008, www.babycomes2.co.uk

Babysitter

Clementine: 07305 524076

Bicycles, repairs and accessories

Jon Wyver: 07842901873, info@oxbicycles.co.uk, www.oxbicycles.co.uk (will deliver and pick up in Oxford free of charge).

Building and roof repairs

Rob Cassettari, North Hinksey Builders: 01865 242312/07977 152884/07900 881511, robnhc@virginmedia.com
Everest Roofing Ltd: 01865 8816856, enquiries@everestroofing.co.uk
Brian French: 07957 315303 (local general builder and plasterer: takes on small jobs)
Paul Hackett, P & R Roofing Ltd (Horspath): 01865 875523, info@proofingoxford.co.uk, www.proofingoxford.co.uk
Mark Mavrommatis: 07970 974792 (installs new windows, repairs old ones)
Tim Mera, KM Builders Oxford: 01865 608 649, 07462 971475, k.mbuildingservices@yahoo.com, kmbuildersoxford.co.uk
Oxford Roofing and Maintenance: 01865 820323, 07468 429000, oxfordroofingandmaintenance.co.uk
Richard S. Pocock: 07766 026648 (general builder)
Mike Shephard, MJ Construction (Abingdon): 07834 321274, mjconstruction@hotmail.co.uk (larger jobs)

Carpet and upholstery cleaning

Paddy Whelehan: 01869 331 896, 07467 503644, hello@wellcleancarpetcleaning.co.uk, www.wellcleancarpetcleaning.co.uk

Car repairs and MOTs

Oxon Autos in Grove near Wantage
(will come to you): 07899 762 949,
oxon.autos@live.co.uk, oxonautos.co.uk

Cat sitting/feeding and dog walking

Shirley Gibson (also housework, shopping, companionship): 07510 991213 (Binsey)

Chimney sweep

Martin Simmonds: 07762 816185,
enquiry@ashlogs.com, www.ashlogs.com
(also supplies ash logs)

Chiropractors and physios

Nicola Plested (therapeutic massage):
01865 245000, 2 Sunningwell Road, OX1
45X

Cleaners

C&S Cleaning Services: 01865 872395,
07824 159855

Computers

Bill Baxter, The Animated Laser Company:
07774 412944 (noon to midnight, Old
Marston), bill@animatedlaser.co.uk
Judy Dendy: 07554 660468,
www.computerdendy.co.uk (lessons and
basic troubleshooting)
Bill Richardson: 01865 376100,
bill@macfaction.co.uk (Macs)
Mac Simple: 01865 580886/07974
321064, www.macsimple.co.uk

Damp

Damprot Renovations Ltd: 01865 742144

Domestic help

See Cat sitting.

Electricians

Baldwin Appliances: 01865 377484,
www.baldwinappliances.com
Jamie Cooke: 07775 700300,
JC.Electrical@hotmail.com
DEC Electricians: 01865
725453, mail@decoxford.co.uk,
www.dec-oxfordltd.co.uk
RJB Electrical: 01865 882723/07711
934348 (rewires and new installations)
Mark Morris (Botley): 07970 342375 (also
plumber)
Andy Webb (A W Electrical Services,
Yarnton): 01865 377171, 07931 127982

Exterior and interior decorators

Rob Bennett: 0790 5819310
Steve Brierty: 01491 836762/0785 0357414
Dave Buckle: 01865 848630
Paul Buckle (Dave's son, and now taking
over from him): 07920 099196
John Chappell: 07985 490970
Dan Driscoll: 07934 718788,
danieldriscoll63@gmail.com (also home
repairs)
Sam Gordon: 07976 516941 (plasterer)
Andrew Turner: 07591 491 804 (repaints
masonry, front doors and windows)

Flooring and general carpentry

Steve, Amazon Flooring: 07899 918015
Jonathan Everett, Lockwood Carpentry:
07597 952381, j.everett.lwc@gmail.com

Footcare in your home

Kate Reid: 07952 127534

Fresh fish

Kim: 07806 602776 (Cleethorpes, delivers
to the island about 6 p.m.)

Gardening services

David Morris: 01865 725875 (gardening
maintenance and some diy)
Jason: info@oxfordgardenservices.co.uk
(tree surgery)
Rory Whelehan: 07341 849035,
rory@rorlyn.co.uk (gardener, lawn/hedge
cutting, general tidying)
Clive: 07787 741968

Green builders and installers

Energy My Way: 0845 371 3181,
www.energymyway.co.uk
JoJu Solar: 0800 0542 977,
www.jojusolar.co.uk
Next Generation Renewable Energy Ltd:
01993 810130, office@ngre.co.uk

Gutter clearing

Ben's Gutters: 0800 9173157/07778
240161, info@bensgutters.com,
www.bensgutters.com

Handymen

Andrew Russell: 01865 453497/07977
837675 (painting, decorating and garden
maintenance)

Home hairdressers

Sally Horton: 07815 445229
Nadine Wright: 07824660184

Locksmith

Davies Hardened Security: 01865
371816/07711 625092

Logs

Logs for All: 0845 269 0306,
www.logsforall.co.uk

Newsagent delivering to Osney

Mr Patel, Court Candy Shop, 65
Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6HJ:
01865 515506/07917 990029,
court candyshop@googlemail.com

Oven cleaning

Wayne: 0791 7785 906 (doesn't use
chemicals)

Pests

Avenge: 02865 246195/078 79405060
(based in Binsey)

Plumbing and heating

APV Boiler Services: 01865 377264
Byron Morris, Avid Heating (boiler repairs
etc.): 07899 629629, 01865 703303,
www.avidheating.co.uk
Jules Jones (formerly Smith):
01993 778244/07790 961395,
reallygoodplumbing@outlook.com
Ivan Kilbee: 01235 847527 /07771 787585
Mark Morris, Botley: 07970 342375 (also
electrics)
Milton and Swan: 07779 992115,
www.miltonandswan.com (all-female
plumbing, tiling, bathrooms)

Remloc Plumbing and Heating: 01235
536345 (Abingdon)

Removals

A. G. Jacob and Sons: 07977 963929,
www.agjacobandson.co.uk
House and Carriage: 01608 811444/07769
585988

Sewing services

Elizabeth Feast: 01386 861010 (loose
covers)
Maria Skoyles: 01865 721460/0759 0264
246 (sewing, repairs and alterations)

Stonework surfaces and tiles

Jashim Hussain of Ultragranite: 01865
407555, www.ultragranite.co.uk

Window cleaning

Mark Jennings: 01865 848904/07773
159198
Michael Temple: 07983 767075,
michaeltemple1@outlook.com

Windows

Oxford Refurbished Sash Windows, John:
info@sashrefurbcompany.co.uk (refurbish
the wooden frame and insert double-
glazed panels)

Wood-burning stove fitters

Heatstore in Charlbury: 01608 819088,
www.heatstoreltd.co.uk (for Defra
approved wood and coal burners)
Lee Hill: 01865 787 940 (HETAS approved)

OIRA info

Bridge Street noticeboard

To display something on the noticeboard
(no larger than A5) contact Julia Marsh
julia.marsh@btconnect.com or put it
through her door at 26 Bridge Street.

Osney email list

To join the residents' email list,
moderated by Alison Burdett, contact:
osiramanager@gmail.com

OIRA committee

Alison Burdett alison.burdett@gmail.com
(email list), Alistair Butchers
alistairbutchers@gmail.com, Joyce
Chalmers 07837 127883, Maureen
Ergeneli 07816 580990, Alan
Goodwin (chair) 07765 034918
alan@alangoodwin.co.uk, Elie Harriss
gekh2@yahoo.co.uk, Robert Lawrence
01865 428323, Jennifer/Nick Meakin
(secretary) jennifermeakin@gmail.com,
Elizabeth Newbery 01865 793360
elizabeth@newberyandengland.com,
Karen Schoenemann 07718 632742,
Gareth Strange 01865 727680, Jula Turner
(treasurer) 07971 881258.

Newsletter and website editor: Jane
Buekett (janebuekett@yahoo.co.uk, 01865
251454).

August 2021

OIRA newsletter insert

7 Rawlinson Road
Oxford
OX2 6UE

Osney Bridge

Thames Water is continuing to work on setting up a temporary pipe to by-pass the damaged water-pipe under the bridge. I have been forwarding occasional updates from Thames Water to the email group. The latest message (on 22 July) said

"I am sorry for the disruption caused by this lengthy and complicated work. The damaged pipe supplies 22,000 properties across Oxford, and we need to make the repair without taking it out of service. At first, we had planned to supply customers via another part of our pipe network but after lengthy investigations and trial repairs we found we were unable to do this. As a result, we had to close one lane of the bridge. We are very aware that this is having a real impact on what is a busy route, with many residents living close to the site, and the repair team are working as quickly as they can to get the job finished.....

"We realise it can be frustrating not to see our staff on the bridge at all times but we still need to keep the lane shut to allow site deliveries and checks to the pipework, as well as ensuring safe working conditions."

They are hoping to finish this phase of the work and get the road open on or before 24 August.

Charging for electric vehicles

There is growing interest in electric cars across the City. I'm glad the charger in West Street is now working again and I'm pushing for more charging provision for the Island. Here is a message from the City Council:

"The replacement West St charger is available for use by any EV car with the correct residents' permit. It is a more powerful charger than a lamppost solution and therefore suitable for both top-up and overnight charging.

Whilst there is no designated bay for this charger, we strongly encourage Osney residents to collaborate and use the bay for charging rather than a standard car parking bay. Bay use will be monitored over the summer to see if this arrangement works. If it is not possible then consultation will be sought to turn the bay into a designated bay for EVs only.

"We are also strongly encouraging all residents that already own an electric vehicle, or are considering owning one, to sign up on the Go Ultra Low Oxford Onstreet demand planner here:

https://www.goultralowoxford.org/homepage/18/register_your_interest_in_on-street_charging

We will shortly issue a call for participants for the next stage of a cable gully trial, that will test a new design of pavement cable gully in different locations across Oxfordshire, twenty of which are anticipated to be installed in Oxford."

I'll be sending more information to the email group soon.

Democrats Club

This 82-year old Club is in dire financial straits. They want to put in an application to renovate the main house. To pay for it, they are discussing building 5 or 6 flats on part of the car park. Look out for a notice or join the email group to find out more.

Missing willow trees at the top of East Street

Two trees have sadly been killed by honey fungus. The City Council have told me that they plan to "replace those that fail with a resistant species appropriate to the setting that are sustainable in a changing climate (with appropriate consultation)".

Susanna